

Participant Handbook Lehigh County Wellness Court



Mission Statement

The Mission of the Lehigh County Wellness Court is to enhance public safety and reduce recidivism by engaging justice involved individuals suffering from mental health diagnoses with community treatment services while under intense court supervision. This is done in the process of criminal case disposition.

Welcome

As a participant, you are expected to be open, honest, and truthful. You must follow all directions given in Court by the Wellness Court Program Judge, follow all terms and conditions of your supervision and comply with the treatment plan developed for you. While in the program, your Probation Officer and treatment providers will be working closely with you and with each other. They will also promptly report all your progress or any problems to the Wellness Court Judge and Team at Wellness Court Team Meetings.

This **HANDBOOK** details what is expected of you as a participant, and it reviews general program information. If you are reading this handbook, it means that you have been accepted into the Wellness Court Program. It also means that we are confident that this court program will help you learn how to make the right choices as you successfully move forward in your life and grow in your recovery.

WHAT IS WELLNESS COURT?

Wellness Court is a specialized program within the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas. It is a court supervised treatment program for participant's who are living with serious mental illness.

Wellness Court is a voluntary program that includes regular court appearances before the Lehigh County Wellness Court Judge.

Wellness Court involves frequent court appearances, random drug testing as well as mental health treatment and possibly substance abuse treatment. The Court awards incentives for compliant behavior and imposes sanctions for negative behavior. Participants who do not comply with the rules may be placed in short term custody, moved back to previous phase or be subject to a variety of other sanctions. Depending upon the severity of the violation, participants may also be terminated from the program. All of the staff working with Wellness Court will assist you to be sure you understand the expectations of the program.

WHAT IS A TREATMENT PLAN?

To be accepted into the Wellness Court, you are required to follow all treatment recommendations. Assessments and/or evaluations will determine a recommended treatment plan which may include the following:

- Outpatient Treatment
- Intensive Outpatient Treatment
- Partial Hospitalization Treatment
- Inpatient/Residential Treatment
- Halfway House or Transitional Housing/Placement
- Self Help/Sober Support Activities (12 step)
- Pro Social Activities

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE PROGRAM ?

Generally, participants will be engaged in the program for a minimum period of 18 months. The program consists of five (5) phases. You must be in compliance with the requirements of the Wellness Court and be working toward achieving goals in order to advance to the next phase.

WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME?

The program offers a second chance to move forward in your life with a new outlook and new skills.

Wellness Court promotes a healthy lifestyle and will help you take control of your life in many ways, and it is designed to help you cope and live with a serious mental illness. In addition, you will learn how to maintain your stability and sobriety, how to be honest, reduce stress, rebuild family relationships, become fully employed and be a productive member of the community that you live in.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE WELLNESS COURT TEAM?

The Judge, District Attorney, Defense Counsel, Program Coordinator, Pretrial Officer, Probation Officer, Case Manager, Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health Professionals and Treatment Providers.

WHAT WE DO: Prior to court sessions, the Wellness Court team members familiarize themselves with your engagement in the program so your progress and participation can be reviewed/discussed with you during the Court sessions. Team members work together to provide a variety of programs designed to combat participant's barriers to treatment and success, while implementing consistent supervision geared towards supporting and helping you with your specific mental health needs, while promoting a substance free and healthy lifestyle. The Team incorporates accountability combined with compassion and understanding in an effort to help every participant succeed.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

To successfully complete the program, you are required to be involved in several activities which are beneficial to you in maintaining your wellness. As a participant in Wellness Court, you will be required to:

- Engage in mental health treatment & substance use treatment (if required)
- Attend court sessions regularly as required
- Meet with your Probation Officer
- Submit to random urinalysis screenings
- Have home visits by your Probation Officer
- Participate in self-help/sober support actives and/or pro-social activities
- Obtain employment and/or attend school
- Obtain your high school diploma or GED
- Pay court fines and restitution (if applicable)
- Submit yourself, residence, and car to search

TREATMENT

Prior to your acceptance into Wellness Court, an assessment was conducted to identify your mental health and substance use treatment needs. As a participant you are required to comply with all treatment recommendations. You and your treatment provider(s) will devise a realistic treatment plan which will act as your treatment guide while you are engaged in the program.

JUDICIAL REVIEWS

You will be required to appear before the Wellness Court Judge on a regular basis. The Judge will be given progress reports regarding your drug test results, attendance, participation, and cooperation in all treatment programs. Additionally, your employment and/or other requirements/conditions that may have been imposed/ordered will be discussed. These reports will come from your Probation Officer, mental health counselor, substance use therapists, other members of the team, and/or support programs in which you are engaged (such as vocational specialists, family advocates, etc.).

The Wellness Court Judge will inquire about your progress and discuss any problems you may be experiencing. If you are doing well, you may be rewarded with incentives which may include, but are not limited to, gift card and/or a reduction in program requirements. Incentives are at the discretion of the Wellness Court Team. Lack of progress will result in a discussion with the Wellness Court Judge to determine further action which may result in a sanction. Sanctions can range from, but are not limited to, an essay, an increase in program requirements, and/or a period of incarceration. Sanctions are at the discretion of the Wellness Court Judge.

The frequency of reviews depends on the phase of the program you are currently in and your compliance with requirements. Unless good reason/cause is shown, failure to appear may result in a warrant being issued for your arrest and detention in jail until you can appear before the court. If you have questions about your court appearances speak with your Probation Officer. Excusals from reporting or scheduled court sessions are at the discretion of your Supervising Officer.

COURTROOM ETIQUETTE AND DRESS CODE

When speaking with the Judge, you will address him/her as "Your Honor."

Your court attire should reflect the following:

- 1) Men must wear a collared shirt. Women must dress modestly and are not permitted to wear low-cut tops or miniskirts.
- 2) No tank tops, muscle shirts, crop-tops, or shirts with obscene words or pictures.
- 3) No clothes with language or pictures advocating tobacco, alcohol, or drug use.
- 4) No sagging (i.e., pants that hang below the waist).
- 5) No unbuttoned shirts.
- 6) No shorts, even in the summertime.
- 7) No hats, caps or bandanas, no sunglasses unless approved by a doctor.
- 8) No gang attire or colors of any kind.
- 9) No gum.

10) NO PHONES OR ELECTRONIC DEVICES MAY BE USED IN THE COURTROOM.



If a participant wears any banned clothing to the courtroom, they may be sent home and risk a potential court absence that may result in a sanction being imposed. Attendance credit and sanction will be at the discretion of the Wellness Court.

All cellphones and electronic devices must be completely turned off and put away (in a purse or back pocket). Failure to comply with this rule may result in the phone/device being confiscated.

ATTENDANCE

You are required to arrive on time for all Court sessions.

As a participant, you are required to attend all your scheduled treatment sessions, probation appointments, scheduled court dates, and any other scheduled appointments.

You are required to be on time for all appointments. If you have an emergency, you should contact your Probation Officer, counselor, etc. regarding your situation. If you are late to any identified appointment/session, it may be considered absent and include a sanction.

Your treatment schedule will vary according to your identified needs and progress in the program. It is your responsibility to schedule all required appointments and arrive on time.

THE RULES

As a participant you will be required to abide by the rules outlined in the Treatment Court Rules & Regulations, including, but not limited to the following:

1. Totally abstain from the use of drugs and alcohol.
2. Inform your treating physicians that you may not take narcotics or addictive medications.
3. You must **IMMEDIATELY** report all arrests or contact with any law enforcement officer to your probation/parole officer (PO) the same day of the contact. If it is after hours, you must leave a voicemail message for your supervising officer.
4. Attend court and treatment sessions as scheduled, submit to random drug testing, maintain sobriety, and be law abiding.
5. Do not associate with people who use or possess drugs or be in areas known to have drug activity.
6. Do not possess any weapons, or reside where weapons are kept, while in the program.
7. Keep the Wellness Court Team, staff and treatment providers informed of your current address and phone number at all times.

8. You will not engage in any gambling activities. No entry into any casinos and you will not participate in online gambling of any kind.

9. As a participant in the Wellness Court Program, your person, property, place of residence, car or personal effects may be searched upon reasonable suspicion that you have or are violating the terms and conditions of the program. Failure to comply will result in further Court proceedings.

10. Dress appropriately for court and treatment sessions.

11. You CANNOT travel outside of the state of Pennsylvania without prior permission from your Supervising Officer. Appropriate travel request information and documentation must be submitted within the designated allotted time. Approval is at the discretion of your Supervising Officer and/or the Wellness Court Team.

12. Abide by all other rules and regulations imposed by the Wellness Court team, listed in the Lehigh County Treatment Court Participants Contract, and identified in the Lehigh County Adult Probation and Parole supervision.

DRUG TESTING

Upon acceptance into the program, the applicant is assigned to a Probation Officer who assumes intensive supervisory and case management responsibilities. Each participant may be monitored via Random Drug Testing. The participant is responsible for the fee of confirmed tests.

If required to obtain drug screening through Averhealth, the participant is to call or check in online daily and report to submit as requested.

The Wellness Court Judge maintains discretion to reset missed random drug tests (generally one every four months).

Diluted samples or attempting to adulterate a urine sample is considered a positive. If a participant attempts to submit a fake urine sample, he/she may be prosecuted for a misdemeanor of the third degree under subsection 7509 of the Crimes Code. You must obtain permission from a Wellness Court Officer before taking any prescribed medications, including over the counter medications and/or dietary supplements.

BANNED PRODUCTS

Weight loss aids are prohibited.

NO POPPY SEEDS!

Salvia, K2, Synthetic Marijuana, Bath Salts, Morning Glory Seeds, Kratom, DMX, Kombucha, CBD Products, Hemp Products or any other mood altering or hallucinogenic substance are strictly prohibited.

When visiting a doctor or the emergency room, you must notify any and all physicians you cannot have narcotic medication. You will inform any treating physician of your involvement in the Wellness Court Program and will request that prescription medication be non-narcotic. You will notify your PO when you seek medical treatment. You must review prescription policy thoroughly before obtaining medical services.

NO ALCOHOL!

The use of alcohol-containing products is prohibited. You will be tested for alcohol.

It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to read product labels, to know what is contained in the products you use and consume and to stop and inspect these products BEFORE you use them.

REMEMBER: You are responsible for what you put in your body.

NO GAMBLING OF ANY KIND! Scratch offs included. Refrain from entering any casino.

It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to limit your exposure to the products and substances listed below that contain ethanol alcohol.

The following products contain alcohol and can result in a positive drug test. Make sure you check the labels or ask a pharmacist!

- Cough syrups and other liquid medications
- Non-Alcoholic Beer and Wine
- Food and Other Ingestible Products that contain ethanol alcohol.
- Mouthwash and Breath Strips
- Hand sanitizers
- Hygiene Products that contain ethanol alcohol
- Solvents and Lacquers
- Oils/topical cream
- Terpenes
- E-Cigarettes that contain alcohol

INCENTIVES OR REWARDS



Participants may be given rewards or incentives for compliant behavior while participating in Wellness Court.

Common rewards are:

- In court praise, encouragement, applause
- Certificates of achievement
- Reduced frequency of Judicial Reviews
- Decreased reporting to probation officer
- Promotion to next phase
- Gift cards
- Bus passes
- A seat in the jury box during Judicial Reviews
- Being addressed by the Judge earlier during Judicial Reviews
- Recovery related inspirational books

Participants are reminded that it is not the monetary value of the reward that matters but rather what the reward symbolizes, which is a period of success while living with a serious and persistent mental illness and possibly a substance use disorder.

SANCTIONS

You will be held accountable for your lack of progress in the program, non-compliance with treatment, inability to maintain sobriety, failure to comply with the rules and regulations of program supervision, and recidivism in the community through sanctions implemented by the Court.

WARNING FROM THE JUDGE

Although technically not a sanction, verbal warnings may be implemented if concerns of behavior and/or progress are presented to prevent a sanction.

Common Sanctions are:

- Reading/Writing assignments
- Letter of apology to the Court
- Increase frequency of drug testing or reporting with your Supervising Officer
- Implementation of a curfew
- Community Service
- Electronic Home Monitoring or home confinement without electronic monitoring,
- Demotion to previous phase, or delay in eligibility for moving to the next phase
- Period of incarceration
- Termination from the Wellness Court Program

The sanctions for non-compliant behavior are imposed to instill a sense of responsibility for one's actions and are at the discretion of the Wellness Court Program.

Remember....
YOUR ACTIONS SPEAK
LOUDER THAN
WORDS!